

*It's against nature to feed bears.  
It's also against the law.*

### Reporting bear problems

If a bear approaches you along the highway or in a campground, please contact one of the following Yukon Environment offices.

Dawson ..... (867) 993-5492  
Faro ..... (867) 994-2862  
Haines Junction ..... (867) 634-2247  
Mayo ..... (867) 996-2202  
Ross River ..... (867) 969-2202  
Teslin ..... (867) 390-2685  
Watson Lake ..... (867) 536-7363  
Whitehorse ..... (867) 667-5221

**If you see someone feeding a bear, please give them this pamphlet. If they seem to be deliberately breaking the law, record the licence number of the vehicle and report it to the **Turn-In-Poachers hotline: 1-800-661-0525 toll free.****

### For more information contact:

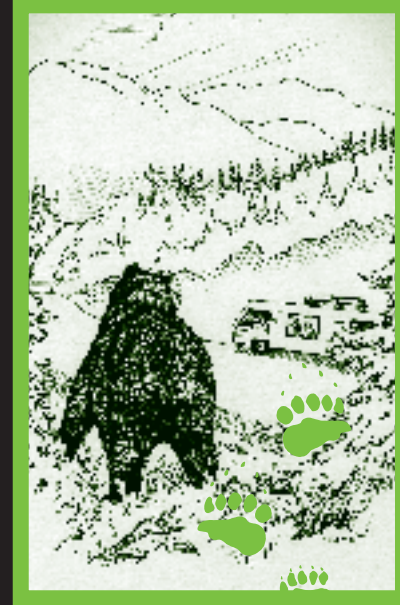
Yukon Department of Environment  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6  
<http://www.environmentyukon.gov.yk.ca>  
Email: [wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca](mailto:wildlife.viewing@gov.yk.ca)

### For more information on viewing wildlife

Pick-up your free "Wildlife Viewing Guide along Yukon Highways" available at Visitor Reception Centres and Government offices or call Toll free in Yukon 1-800-661-0408 extension 8291, or (867) 667-8291.

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# BEAR VIEWING



*Along Yukon Highways....*

**Yukon**  
Environment

## Roadside bear viewing for Yukon highway travellers

*Seeing a bear can be a highlight of your northern journey. However, bear viewing does come with some risks. Follow these simple guidelines to reduce the risks and safely enjoy bear viewing from your vehicle.*

### How to increase your chances of seeing roadside bears

- Carry binoculars and perhaps a spotting scope. Stop occasionally and glass over river sandbars, open alpine areas and grassy hillsides.
- Try driving during the late evening and early morning when bears are more active.

Travellers will have a better chance of seeing a bear during green up (late April to early June) and again in August when berries ripen.

### Why you see bears along roadways

The bears you see along roadways are usually digging up roots or eating grasses and other plants. Plants in the open, sunny areas beside the road emerge early in the season and grow well. Many roads, including the Alaska Highway, pass through valley bottoms and along rivers and streams - places where bears naturally look for the plants that make up about 90 per cent of a Yukon bear's diet.



# Roadside bear viewing - the right way

## Traffic safety comes first

Most of us get a little excited when we spot a bear on the roadside. When you're the driver, realise that your first responsibility is for safety. If there is traffic behind you, keep your eyes on the road and don't stop. Recognise that your passengers will get a quick look at the bear but you may not.

If there is no other traffic near you, slow down and pull over where it is safe to do so. **Don't stop in the middle of the road, or close to a hill or curve.** Other drivers may not see you in time to avoid a collision.

## If the bear retreats or seems to ignore you...

- Stay in your vehicle.
- Take pictures, watch for a few moments, and then move on.
- Keep your vehicle on the shoulder of the road.
- Never feed a bear.

## If the bear approaches your vehicle...

- Leave immediately. This bear may have been previously fed by people and could be dangerous.

## Types of bears you'll see on the roadside

The bear you're most likely to see along southern Yukon roadways is the black bear. Grizzly bears are also seen, especially along the Kluane section of the Alaska Highway, the Haines Road and Dempster Highway. Polar bears live along Yukon's Arctic coast where there are no roads.

## The difference between black bears and grizzly bears

Colour is not a good indicator. Black bears in Yukon range from pure black through various shades of brown. Grizzlies range in colour from dark brown to almost blonde. The main differences are the shape of their backs and faces.

### Black Bear

1. Highest point of back is well behind shoulders.
2. In profile, face shows a straight line between forehead and nose.
3. Front claws are dark-coloured, well curved, and less than half the length of your fingers.

### Grizzly Bear

1. Highest point of back is shoulder hump.
2. A grizzly's face may look dished or concave in profile, but this isn't as obvious in young grizzlies.
3. Front claws are light-coloured, slightly curved and about as long as your fingers.



## Never feed a bear!

Bears are quick learners when it comes to finding food. They cover a large territory in search of it. If you toss food out of your vehicle for a bear, it will remember the experience. The next time that bear encounters people, it may approach them to see if they also have food to hand out.

## A fed bear is a dangerous bear!

Bears that approach people looking for food can be dangerous. In 1994, an Alaska Highway traveller feeding a black bear through an open window was badly mauled. Attacks like this can take place for any number of reasons. If a bear learns that people provide food, it may have to be destroyed to protect the public.

## Be careful with your garbage!

Use the bear-proof garbage containers found in all Yukon government roadside rest areas and campgrounds. Leaving garbage by the roadside, in an open vehicle or unattended attracts bears.

## Bears are not easily replaced!

Northern bears don't reproduce quickly. A female grizzly bear is about 8 years old when she produces her first litter and it will be another 4 years before she has cubs again. Having about 2 cubs each litter, this bear will produce 8 offspring over her 20-year lifespan. About half of those cubs will die a natural death before they reach maturity. Half of the survivors will be females. So if things go well, the mother bear will leave 2 reproducing females behind when she dies. The loss of even a few female bears can lead to a population decline that can take years to reverse, if it at all. Bears you encounter are wild animals, and it is our responsibility to keep them wild.



*"One time we watched a black bear eating dandelions beside the Alaska Highway. The bear was lying flat on its belly, pulling itself along with its paws while scooping up mouthfuls of dandelion heads. We didn't get out of the vehicle. We didn't feed the bear. We didn't even take a picture. But my kids still talk about that bear."* – Yukon Highway Traveller

